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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a set of charts that may help a teacher develop a theory about what is working well in the classroom and where problems exist. Each chart is divided into two categories repeatedly. In effect, the chart serves as a dichotomous key. At each point where two choices diverge, the teacher should move to the more likely answer. The five charts help a teacher determine the place to start a change. The charts, which address teacher and student behavior, are: (1) overview of the entire behavior key; (2) teacher: classroom practices; (3) teacher: rewarding practices; (4) student: ability to do the work; and (5) student: motives. (SLD)

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Teaching Tool for Diagnostics:

The Behavior Key

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Teaching Tool for Diagnostics



THE BEHAVIOR KEY



Q: "How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?"

A. "Just one - - - if it really wants to change."



Q. "What two things can a teacher force a child to do?"

A. "Breathe and blink!"



It may be human nature to see problems and worries as something wrong with another person instead of ourselves. It certainly is human to want the burden of change to fall to the other person. This is also true in the classroom setting. Teachers work out a plan for teaching and presenting material, and there is the implicit belief that a good lesson, if it is well presented and beautifully taught will inspire youngsters to learn. Reality presents a different picture. Even in the best lesson, the greatest oratory, someone is not attuned or has a personal agenda which detracts from the moment.

Our automatic response to those students who interfere or create trouble in the learning situation is to: 1) get them out of the environment - office, hall, counselor, expulsion, referral for testing and special education program; 2) make an individualized behavior change program to coerce them to change (for their own good, of course!) if they will be remaining in the classroom. This nests neatly into the belief that "I have a right to teach and no student has the right to keep others from learning." It follows from the behavioristic notion that people are basically animals and that we/they need to be trained and that the great

trainer will get results. It fits well with the paradigm that suggests that people are explainable, predictable, and two-dimensional. It should work -- that is, it should work if behaviorists are correct in believing that changing the environment automatically changes the child.

It has always worked for some of the students. In fact, most of the time 60-80% of the students respond to this format. Unfortunately the 1/5 to 1/3 of the group who won't cooperate constitutes a serious number of youngsters who are not gaining an education, not learning to cope with society, not making great strides in understanding themselves or sharing their gifts within the community. And that is very serious.

The following charts may assist a teacher to develop a theory about what is working well, and where problems exist. The chart is divided into two categories repeatedly. In effect it is a dichotomous key. At each point where two choices are offered, move to the more likely answer. In this manner, follow the charting until a "fit" occurs.

Charts

- #1 Overview snapshot showing the entire behavior key
- #2 Teacher: classroom practices
- #3 Teacher: rewarding practices
- #4 Student: ability to do the work
- #5 Student: motives

The first category questions if a change in environment will make the difference for students. Since the simplest changes are personal changes, a **teacher** begins by asking if s/he has the key to the problem. Two over-arching issues about environment are consistency and value of the structure. The teacher reviews classroom practice. If there is a possibility of an intermittent environment, the teacher questions self to determine if it is an issue of safety - a sense of punishment, or inconsistency. If both of these are fruitless, then the **teacher** reviews reward practices. Step by step, the teacher reviews possible answers for ways that the environment may be at issue, or ways that personality in the classroom may be inhibiting learning for troubled students.

After exhausting the potential for personal change, the teacher turns to the **Child** side of the chart. Once again, the key is traced, looking for a potential answer. The initial question is the most parsimonious - can the student do the work? If the teacher is uncertain, this becomes the focus for change. The philosophical questions always pursue teachers who realize that a student cannot meet the typical classroom, district or state mandated goals.

Some of those questions might include:

- a. How can I justify teaching this student below grade level?
- b. How do I grade such students?
- c. It's not fair to others to give one student a different set of assignments.
- d. If I do teach students at their level what happens to me and my standing when the achievement test scores are lower?
- e. I can't be expected to individualize instruction when I have 132 other students in my class who aren't getting that kind of special treatment.
- f. I have a quality control issue here! This student is supposed to memorize this. If I don't see that s/he does, how can I say I'm teaching? I won't pass a student and give them credit when they can't graph binomials.

The questions and concerns are valid. The answers are uncertain and difficult.

As long as we continue to hold to the current set of beliefs about education and the role of teaching and the way learning occurs, there will be conflict between what is best practice for students and what is valued and measured as an acceptable end result. The problem of the student who can't learn what we are teaching will not go away because we can or cannot agree on the philosophical questions. That student continues to sit in class and create problems, even if the problems are quiet personal ones. So the person who is truly a teacher finds a justification or works on without one, because someone at some point must reach the student and the best place to begin is always the point where learning and success are possible.

If the **student** is able to do the work, then other motives are pursued. Once again we turn to questions about the student. Dreikurs' (1968) writings on motives becomes the final point of the search. This is covered in chart five. As the four motives are reviewed, the obvious concern arises. How can one know which is the real motive? The solution comes in listening to the response a teacher feels from the student. Each motive tends to set off a nonverbal sensation in the receiver of the emotion. If a student wants attention, the first response is to provide that - fall in the trap and provide the desired response, or to feel irritated by the constant drain on energy which attending requires. If the student wishes power, the teacher response is to pull up short and become involved in a power struggle. If the motive is revenge or anger, the teacher is more likely to feel anger and hostility - to dislike the student. The helpless students may virtually be invisible. We may not recall if the student was in attendance, have trouble remembering their names, fail to call on them or make eye contact.

In addition to the five charts for determining initial place to begin changing, there are some teacher helps for addressing the hot spots which are frequent issues in working with those few students who do not seem well served

or ready to help themselves gain an education.



Gathering Speed



Teacher wants to punish If a teacher sees this as a way of developing students, the classroom will be an unhappy place for them and the students. It may be necessary for the teacher to rethink the options available. Many times coercive power seems like a simple solution. It is quick, it tends to stop an immediate problem, it has been used on us and modeling in the past by teachers and parents alike. It has terrible potential to backfire. Often the students desire revenge and lose sight of the obligation to learn. It also strips the sense of personal responsibility from the student. for these reasons it is briefly self rewarding for the teacher, but the long range goal of student as effective and self responsible is sabotaged.

Teacher is uncertain The journey itself in teaching is an uncertain one. It is not easy to define what it means to be a good teacher. It is not within our current ability to predict who will be a good teacher, even during student teaching. Teaching is an evolving role, a very individual practice of both art and craft. One certainty, however, comes with the student. If a person does not like to be with people, to help and serve others, then teaching is a very poor choice. The days are spent in the midst of others, and the greatest rewards are the intangible, non-monetary kind --- knowing you have made a difference, seeing eyes light up with understanding, finding a better way to teach a concept, coming across and acquiring a buried treasure of knowledge.

If a person is not in the process of growing and liking themselves, teaching is also too uncertain. There are a myriad of times when a teacher feels threatened, challenged, unappreciated, deprecated. A teacher who is going to be happy in the profession will want to change, to risk, to try knowing that there may

be a failure as a result. A teacher who is going to stay in the profession cannot pick up every challenge to authority and take it as an affront. There can only be peace if the teacher is able to let many people be in charge, if there is a desire to say "yes" as often as possible, if there is a deep desire to see students as potentially equal - or perhaps more gifted and clever in some areas. A teacher who truly becomes a teacher knows how to trust, be disappointed and trust again, to love and care despite anger and despair being expressed out of frustration.

Rewarding students If our students are much like the animals in behavior research - rats, cats, dogs, pigeons, then the findings about training animals will transfer into the classroom. If, instead, as many writers and researchers suggest, there are many more disappointments and failures than successes in getting students to transfer from the training to intrinsic love of learning, then again we are faced with redefining the way we deal with youngsters in our schools. It is difficult to set up a reinforcement schedule to reward students. If it works, we have the problems involved in keeping it going and eventually transferring it over to the student as an inherent behavior. If we are not cautious, the student learns to depend on the reward rather than valuing the new behavior. It may even be that by rewarding one behavior we keep more advanced learning from emerging.

Learning to walk and talk are two arduous tasks which we accepted without a bribe and which we carried through at our own pace and with internal pressure. All of us have a repertoire of hundreds of other accomplishments which are just as real. We have a wonderful work ethic and desire to learn. We have a great ability to learn and acquire new habits without even thinking about them, sometimes with the first try. We like candy immediately. Brussels sprouts may be a slower acquisition. In fact, some of the population will never taste them and might have liked them instantly, while others will never gain an appreciation

for them as a dietary choice.

If teachers reframe tasks in the classroom to be inherently rewarding, to be self initiating, it sets up a different perspective about the importance of tasks and the manner in which we will approach students who do not find them inherently pleasant or rewarding. From studying the development of youngsters, we have learned that there is a great push which initiates a set of behaviors. When the press for acquisition occurs, students are dauntless in the energy they will expend. On the other hand, if a task is too difficult or not a natural part of the repertoire, many other forces will have to intervene to establish and maintain the energy. Such a foolish waste it seems, to repeatedly push youngsters to acquire atypical behaviors or to force acquisition at atypical times! Indeed, how foolish it seems to insist that all children gain the same skills on schedule rather than allowing the natural and joyous development of a love of learning, a longing to excel at natural gifts, a pleasure in the press of fulfilling personal ambitions.

Two very real questions emerge. If a child emerges, much like a flower blossoms, is there anything to be gained by forcing? Is there a mid ground between highly structured timed acquisition of required skills as an educational model and setting the student adrift? Perhaps the best analogy would be to ask if there is a place between a wild horse and a horse with a broken spirit. We can find the path between irresponsible coercion and responsible guiding, leading and gentling. It just may not be the same place or in the same manner for every student. In conclusion, rewarding students correctly is a difficult skill and one which can make a dramatic difference in the acquisition of knowledge and the tools for becoming a life long learner.

Student as attention seeker The feeling that attention seeking usually generates in the teacher is usually a sense of annoyance or irritation. When these emotions emerge in response to student behavior, look for attention seeking and the motive

for not staying on task or attending to instruction. It is a long difficult battle for some youngsters to take a quiet place in the classroom. For others, it is done with relative ease. In the early years there are many more youngsters who blurt out ideas, answer questions with non sequitur comments, who talk because they wish to talk and who water play in the bathroom instead of getting right back to class. For the youngsters who learn to be still easily, there is no issue. As the situation shifts, they adjust to the approved level of participation. If talking is regulated, they regulate their talking to match. If activity level is curtailed, they fit within the acceptable parameters without issue.

For the youngsters who are not easily persuaded to join a group, to take turns, to follow rules because they are rules, or adjust activity and noise level to fit group situations, the transition to putting self needs and desires after group membership is more difficult. These students need assistance, guidance and patient coaching. It is also possible that they will need more attention and one-to-one intervention than other students. The following are actions which usually settle the student:

- * Get closer to the student during instruction
- * Ignore negative acts and inappropriate behavior,
- * Distract and redirect the student
- * Make frequent and sustaining eye contact
- * Ask the student to personally take control of self
- * Give praise for close approximations to good behavior

Student as powerful or controlling The feeling that power seeking usually generates in the teacher is a sense of anger. When these emotions emerge in response to student behavior, look for evidence that the student is working from a more autonomous or controlling position and observe to determine if the motive for not staying on task or attending to instruction comes from an unwillingness to

feel bossed or directed. Some youngsters are so resistant to direction that they will behave poorly in spite of potential harm to themselves or promised punishment which will take away a privilege that is very important to them.

Some children have a difficult time with control issues. As noted earlier in the chapter, some stages are also more prone to a desire to be in charge and reactive to directions. Engaging in a power struggle with a youngster is consistently inappropriate. To deal with the student, the teacher is drawn into a battle of wits, words or threats. The student, at that point has already won, since the challenge to authority has been successful. Regardless of the outcome, the teacher has been bested. In many instances it is best to give a student a series of choices, all of which would be acceptable.

Humor is helpful if the student does not feel an edge of sarcasm or anger. Anger from the student can be ignored, since attention to the anger is viewed as the teacher taking up the challenge. High intensity outlets which allow the student to use up adrenalin, to build a better sense of well being and slow the anger may also help. Since the student is usually keenly attuned to fairness and consistency, these are two helpful behaviors which give the teacher a chance to direct the student's actions toward these virtues. Difficult as it may be, the teacher needs to model self control, to let the student know that controlling self is difficult but more worthwhile than controlling others. The teacher can direct the student's effort by asking about ability to control angry words, to stay on task when tired, to complete assignments which do not initially seem palatable. The less emphasis the teacher places on the power struggle, the sooner the student will move to a position of self control. An added element comes from the dignity the adult maintains, the feeling of self control and the safety and security which flows to all students who recognize the teacher's concern.

Student as Hostile The feeling that hostility usually generates in the teacher is a

desire for getting even, upstaging the student, getting revenge. When these emotions emerge in response to student behavior, look for rage and deep emotional pain as a part of the student's world. The same strategies discussed above work with the hostile and the controlling student. The important key with this motive is to recognize that the student has much less ability to stop acting out once it is initiated. Also, the student's fuse is much shorter, much more volatile. The student needs a clear message that regardless of feelings or pain, others may not be hurt in an outburst. The student also needs to know that the teacher will assist in managing situations to help the student maintain equilibrium and further, that the teacher will have high regard for the student, despite the rage that is felt, the seething feelings which emerge from time to time.

Many youngsters who find themselves expressing hostility have very little trust of people. Building a relationship is one of the most productive means for helping the student to move into a healthy state of mind. The teacher will have the most success if the relationship is a giving situation without any emotional need for student approval. Most youngsters who have reached a point of frequently expressing hostility will test the relationship repeatedly and will discount many of the kind acts. At times there will be belligerence directed toward the teacher and others to reassert the feelings of unworthiness. All this reminds the teacher that love and friendships need to come from peers. The teacher can give support, guidance, nurturing, but the student both desires and needs the mature giving rather than teacher as peer.

Student as Hostile The helpless student tends to be ignored. For the most part, a student who displays planned helplessness or who "disappears" is the most deeply troubled. It may be effective to help the student rejoin the community of learners through a peer group initially, choosing participants carefully for their accepting and loving demeanor. Other practices which help the student to improve self

worth include giving high levels of tender concern and awareness, warm and approving eye contact, attentiveness to the student's presence and efforts, genuine praise for efforts to share self with others, a secure and safe environment with genuine social skills extended to all by all and consistent reinforcement of student effort to control and discipline the self.

If the student is depressed and discouraged, the first reaction after a sense of relief will be acting out. It can be expected that the student will first express some of the unwelcome suppressed emotions and try expressing negative as well as positive responsiveness to others once there is a belief that someone cares enough to listen to feelings and validate the student. There is also the possibility that the student will become demanding and clingy or possessive. If this occurs, the student is expressing a genuine need and counseling as well as peer support are indicated.

Student as Disciplining Agent

Teachers are concerned about freeing students from the constraints which are currently in place because even master teachers are having a difficult time keeping students in control. More than one teacher has descried the loss of physical punishment as a tool for deterring student mischief and restraining any unwillingness on the part of the student to follow guidelines and rules. Fear (euphemistically called proper respect for adult authority) has been a vital tool in classrooms of the past. And grades, rather than reflecting a set of accomplishments, rather than belonging to the student, have also been used as a form of manipulation.

Embedded in each statement of concern about class out of control, there tends to be a common misconception that teachers can control students. Teachers cannot contain students. If students are to be well-behaved, it cannot be through coercion or fear, manipulation or bribery. Teachers need to teach students to

contain themselves.

*Hyperactive students are some of the most difficult students to contain. In fact, teachers have said, and have been told that hyperactive children cannot help the way they are behaving and must be allowed to misbehave or be placed on medication. This simply is not true.

Hyperactive students can be taught to work within the environment and to monitor their own bodies to increase ability to stay on task. They can be taught to focus their eyes on reading materials for short, every increasing periods of time. They can be taught to "be the boss of their own hands," and keep from perseverating for ever lengthening periods of time. They can be taught to move in purposive ways to use up excess energy and to monitor their own state of self control with ever growing success and sophistication. These students can be taught to contain themselves.

*Students who have rage disorders can be taught self awareness and can assist others to work with them in helpful ways. Some of the children who have been diagnosed with this condition have their outbursts following a petit mal seizure. Once these students recognize the patterns and are able to sense imminence of these momentary lapses followed by the outbursts, they can contain themselves in semi privacy. They can be taught to contain themselves.

*Students who have serious control issues can become aware of the ways that the behavior is interfering with relationships - adult, family and peer interactions. They can be taught a series of more and more complex coping mechanisms, self control exercises, can remove themselves from an impending conflict, deal constructively with the anger or adrenalin, and contain their responses. They can be taught to contain themselves.

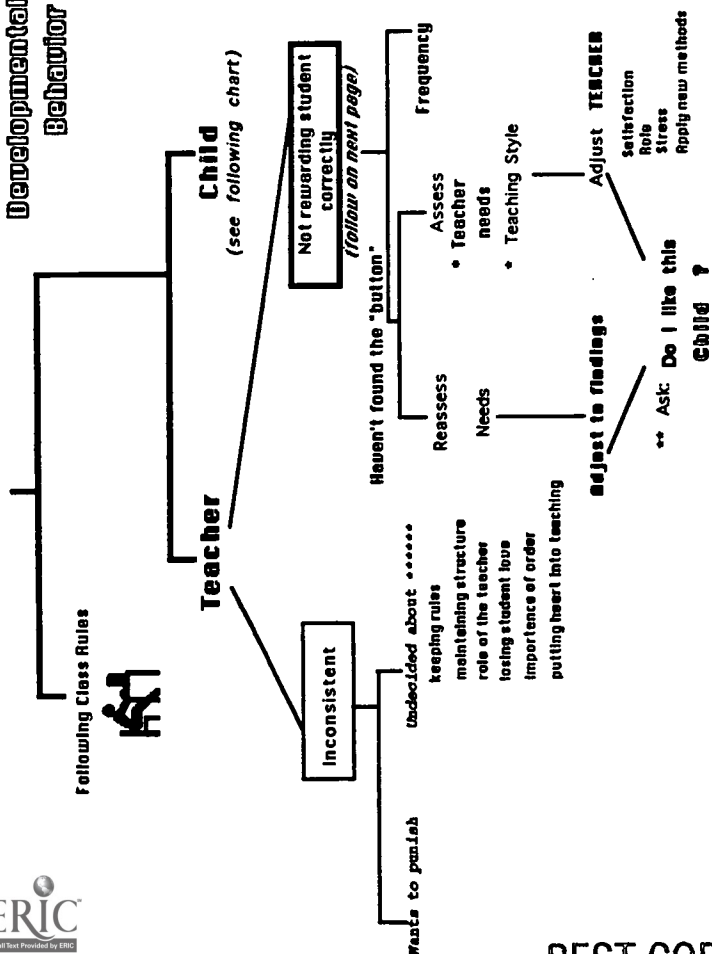
*Children who are delinquent, who have acting-out behaviors and who strive to involve others in conflict also have periods of time when they are engaged

in purposive, socially appropriate interactions. As a member of a gang, these youngsters can be compliant, can follow a very strict code of dress, mannerisms, body language and set of time constraints. Anyone who can follow a code that closely can be taught to contain himself or herself. Certainly there is no lack of evidence to show that hard core criminals are able to stay locked up and follow a stringent set of guidelines to the point of being let out early for "good behavior." They can be taught to contain themselves.

Again, the point is, teachers cannot contain students, educators facilitate and provide learning opportunities for students to learn to contain themselves. Then they provide a situation for practicing and perfecting that self discipline, that self control. The educators model self control, they value and reinforce student discipline and they no longer press for conformity, for obedience "because I said so". They must also remove themselves from the realm of punishment and retaliation. If a student is inappropriate, there is a possibility that restitution is necessary. Again, however, to have any value it must come from the will of the child to make a difference, and it cannot come from an imposed punitive stance.

Another way of describing this is to put the focus on helping the child to make better choices, appropriate choices, rather than punishing the student. In this context natural and logical consequences are far more likely to bring the student to a position of making better choices, first for self, and over time, to gain the ability to make socially appropriate choices as well.

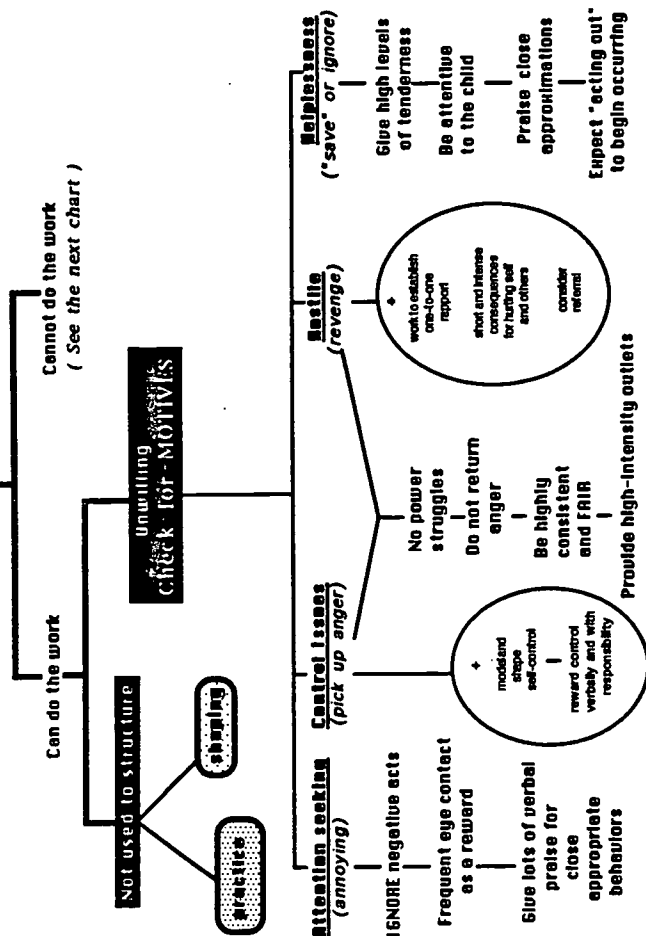
Developmental Discipline Behavior Key



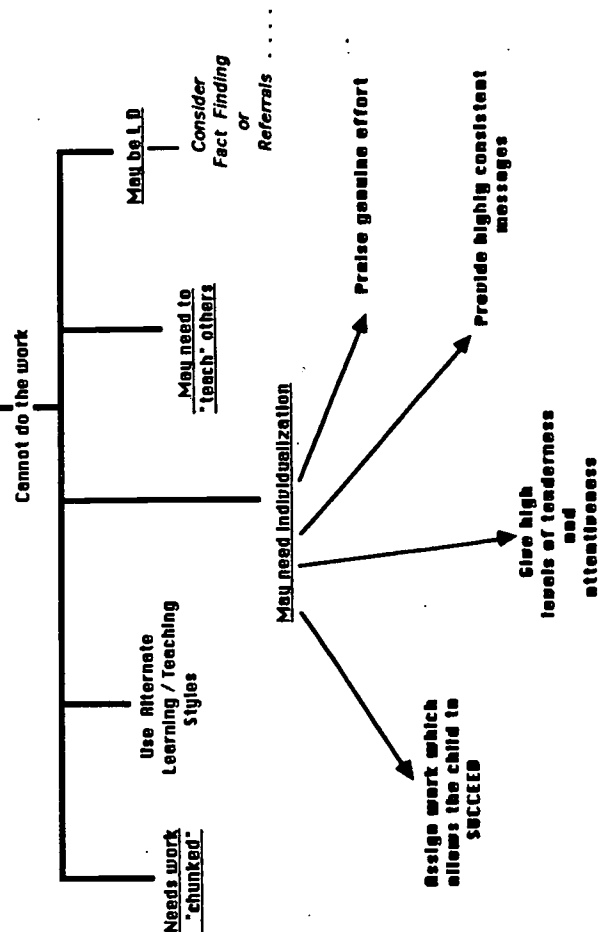
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Child



Child



Developmental Discipline Behavior Key

Following Class Rules



Teacher

Child

(see following chart)

Inconsistent

wants to punish

Undecided about *****
 keeping rules
 maintaining structure
 role of the teacher
 losing student love
 importance of order
 putting heart into teaching

Haven't found the "button"

Reassess

Needs

Assess

* Teacher

needs

* Teaching Style

Frequency

Not rewarding student correctly

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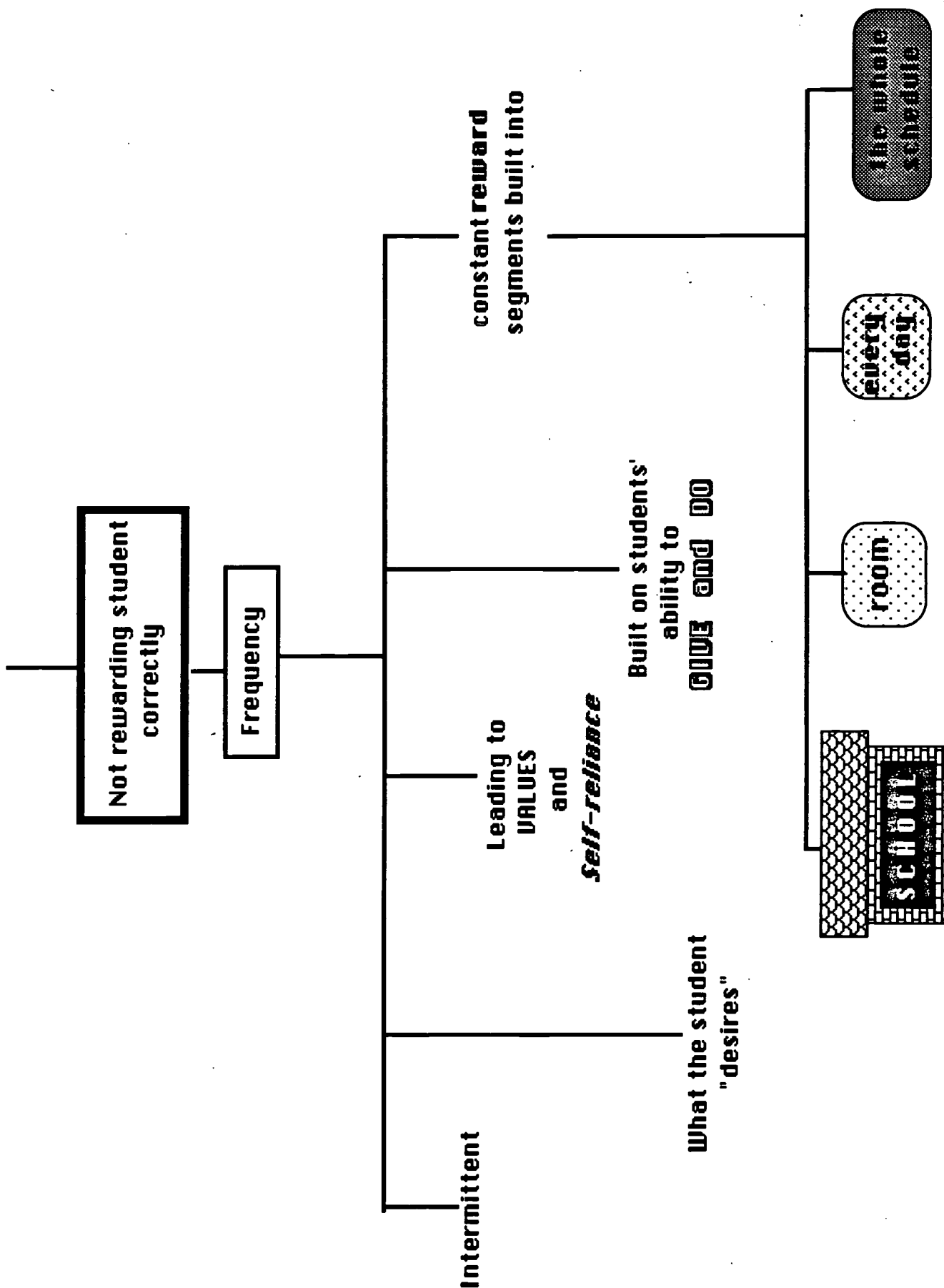
Adjust to findings

** Ask: Do I like this
 Child ?

Adjust TEACHER

Satisfaction
 Role
 Stress
 Apply new methods

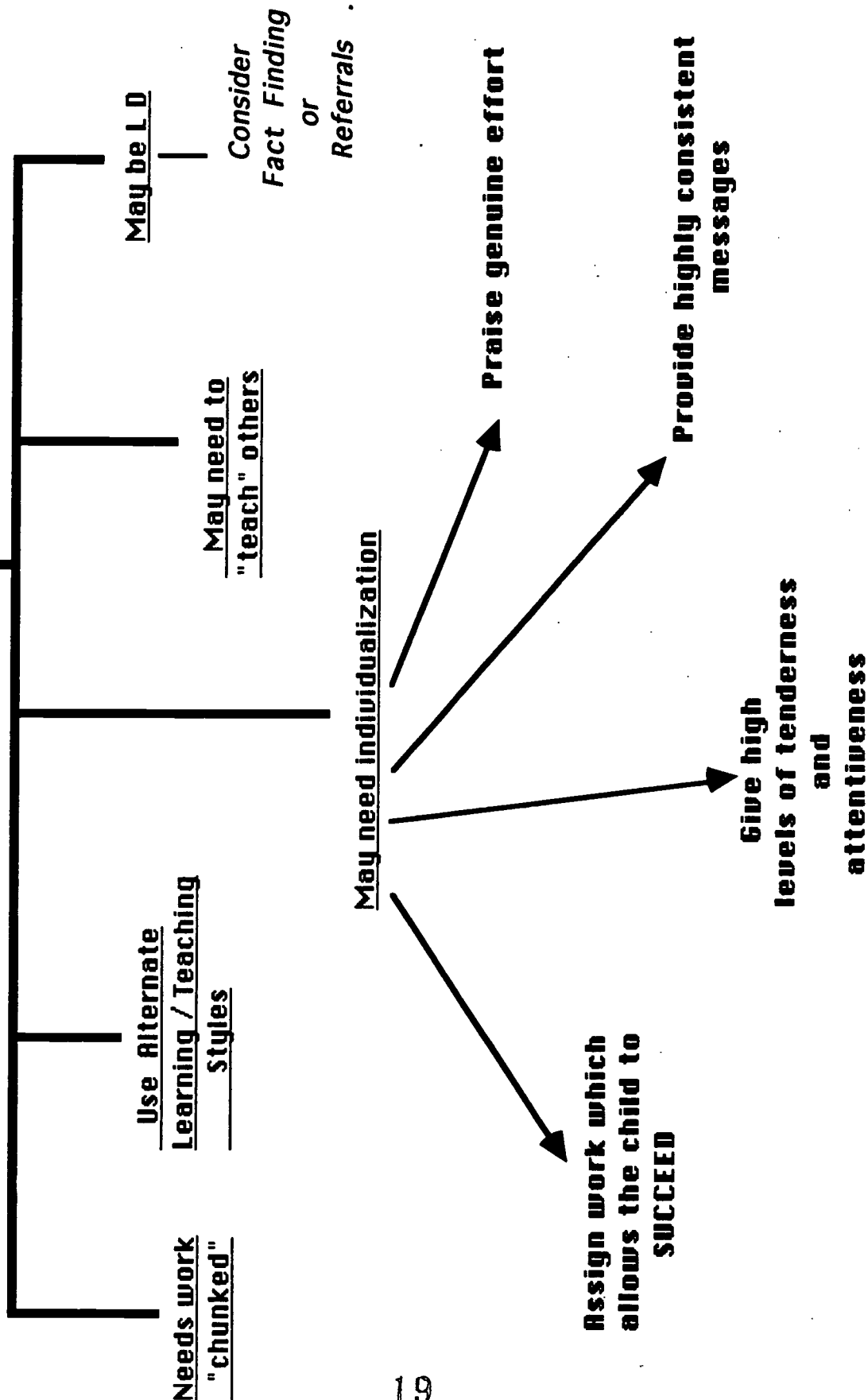
Teacher



Developmental Discipline Behavior Key

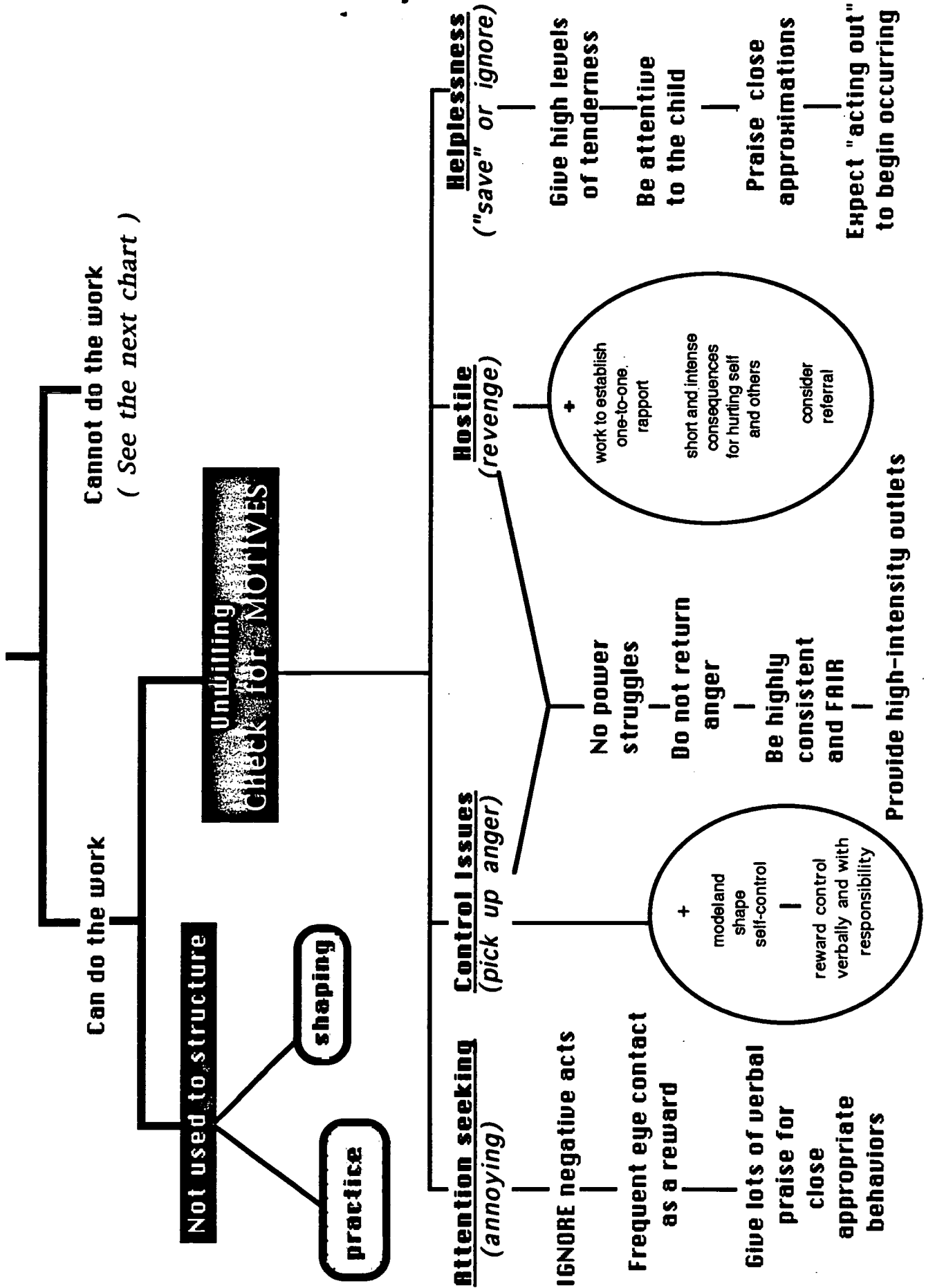
Child

Cannot do the work



Developmental Discipline Behavior Key

Child





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